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# Foreign Ownership of U.S. Agricultural Land--Highlights

U.S. Department  
of AgricultureWashington, D.C.  
20250

Foreign entities and individuals reported by December 31, 1980, that they owned 7.8 million acres or 0.6 percent of U.S. agricultural land. The 2.2-million-acre rise since the U.S. Department of Agriculture's last report does not necessarily mean that all of the increase in foreign landownership occurred since the closing date of the previous report--February 1, 1980. The increase is partially due to the inclusion of 1979 reports filed after last year's cutoff date.

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act of 1978 requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report those holdings to the Secretary of Agriculture. A USDA report to be released by early summer analyzes 11,872 forms accepted by the Department from February 1, 1979, through December 31, 1980, the closing date for this report. Foreign owners reported on the following acreages:

Holdings	6,657,629 acres
Acquisitions	1,740,544 acres
Dispositions	557,053 acres
Land-use changes	20,839 acres
Leases	630,633 acres

Crop, pasture, and other agriculture account for 57 percent of all holdings and acquisitions; forest for 37 percent; and nonagricultural and unreported use for 6 percent.

Corporations own 81 percent of the holdings and acquisitions; partnerships, 10 percent; and individuals, 8 percent. The remaining 1 percent is held by estates, trusts, associations, institutions, and others such as real estate investment trusts, church groups, and foreign organizations not identifiable with the above categories.

U.S. corporations, in which 5 percent or more of the ownership is foreign, reported owning 50 percent of all holdings and acquisitions. The remaining 50 percent were reported as being held or acquired by foreign persons (individuals and entities) not affiliated with a U.S. corporation.

Foreign persons from Canada, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, the Netherlands Antilles, the United Kingdom, and West Germany account for 76 percent of the holdings and acquisitions.

A number of parcels are held only in part by foreign investors. When the total holdings and acquisitions are adjusted for these partial interests, the acreage figure is reduced by 13 percent.

Among the States, Maine reported the largest number of acres owned by foreign persons. Foreign holdings and acquisitions in Maine account for 11 percent of the total holdings and acquisitions, and more than 5 percent of the total privately owned agricultural land in Maine. However, 91 percent of these acres are only partially owned by one large timber company.

Except for Maine, foreign holdings and acquisitions are concentrated in the South and West. Alabama, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas reported 32 percent of all holdings and acquisitions. Arizona, California, Colorado, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah reported 29 percent of all holdings and acquisitions. Rhode Island is the only State with no reported foreign-owned agricultural land.

No change in intended use was reported for 89 percent of the acreage. No change in tenure was reported for 45 percent of the acres while some change was reported for 37 percent of the acres.

Section 5 of the act requires a determination of the effects of foreign holdings and transfers, particularly how they affect family farms and rural communities. The first report to the Congress, covering the first 6 months' activities under the act, contains an initial assessment of the economic and social effects of foreign ownership of U.S. agricultural land. In summary, the acreage of foreign-owned U.S. agricultural land is too small to measure the impact on agriculture at the national level. In areas of heaviest concentration, some communities could be adversely affected. The Department currently has research underway comparing production, pricing, and distributive impacts of foreign ownership of land with that of domestic landownership.

Section 5 of the act also requires an evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of the reporting requirements. The program cost approximately \$509,000 for 1980, compared with \$600,000 reported for 1979. A new survey of the county ASCS offices (the USDA offices responsible for collecting foreign ownership data) indicates that 87 percent of the offices are at least "reasonably sure" that foreign investors are complying with the law. As of December 31, 1980, the Department had assessed 1,950 penalties for late filings, amounting to approximately \$250,000.

Table 1--U.S. agricultural landholdings, land acquisitions, and land dispositions by foreign owners, by State

State	Holdings <sup>1</sup>	Acquisitions <sup>2</sup>	Dispositions <sup>2</sup>
		<u>Acres<sup>3</sup></u>	
Alabama	180,955	64,631	20,230
Alaska	337	96	--
Arizona	154,501	72,461	5,082
Arkansas	54,165	41,861	13,909
California	418,478	267,017	113,202

See footnotes at end of table

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Table 1--U.S. agricultural landholdings, land acquisitions, and land dispositions by foreign owners, by State--Continued

State	Holdings <sup>1</sup>	Acquisitions <sup>2</sup>	Dispositions <sup>2</sup>
		Acres <sup>3</sup>	
Colorado	232,620	120,547	33,430
Connecticut	303	301	--
Delaware	6,627	940	--
Florida	316,399	102,857	33,951
Georgia	325,311	103,114	6,478
Guam	336	0	--
Hawaii	47,938	7,806	--
Idaho	12,900	7,095	5,979
Illinois	109,808	22,398	4,727
Indiana	92,573	10,547	4,929
Iowa	27,408	9,466	685
Kansas	43,661	21,422	--
Kentucky	22,638	7,657	149
Louisiana	115,172	59,028	25,281
Maine	960,677	3,891	--
Maryland	22,530	12,937	1,159
Massachusetts	438	15,000	--
Michigan	43,412	3,092	297
Minnesota	28,272	480	721
Mississippi	89,566	47,818	5,322
Missouri	60,456	5,890	4,665
Montana	272,768	95,524	56,068
Nebraska	79,994	1,252	647
Nevada	155,847	47,469	153,312
New Hampshire	30,973	1,201	128
New Jersey	19,868	3,408	382
New Mexico	313,220	8,968	--
New York	211,806	21,346	1,531
North Carolina	177,276	44,840	6,402
North Dakota	17,727	1,016	--
Ohio	25,677	10,274	3,003
Oklahoma	24,849	1,811	575
Oregon	169,691	3,215	1,668
Pennsylvania	154,561	1,766	216
Puerto Rico	780	603	--

See footnotes at end of table

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Table 1--U.S. agricultural landholdings, land acquisitions, and land dispositions by foreign owners, by State--Continued

Country	Holdings <sup>1</sup>	Acquisitions <sup>2</sup>	Dispositions <sup>2</sup>
		<u>Acres<sup>3</sup></u>	
Rhode Island	0	0	--
South Carolina	289,531	64,017	7,213
South Dakota	18,694	21,238	--
Tennessee	296,484	30,439	4,337
Texas	440,431	277,016	31,654
Utah	222,908	10,344	86
Vermont	50,971	14,919	2,112
Virginia	59,132	47,457	1,663
Washington	99,925	9,140	1,611
West Virginia	21,393	2,393	--
Wisconsin	13,620	4,868	1,898
Wyoming	122,022	5,668	2,351
Total	6,657,629	1,740,544	557,053

-- = No report

<sup>1</sup> On February 1, 1979. <sup>2</sup> February 2, 1979 through December 31, 1980.

<sup>3</sup> 1 hectare = 2.47 acres.

Table 2--U.S. agricultural landholdings and acquisitions by country of foreign owner

Country	Holdings <sup>1</sup>	Acqui- sitions <sup>2</sup>		Country	Holdings <sup>1</sup>	Acqui- sitions <sup>2</sup>
	<u>Acres<sup>3</sup></u>				<u>Acres<sup>3</sup></u>	
Argentina	968	9,038	::	Cameroon	--	7
Australia	2,099	799	::	Canada	1,236,603	82,696
Austria	6,131	1,731	::	Cayman Islands	7,877	23,526
Bahamas	23,128	10,586	::	Chile	245	--
Belgium	9,544	49,549	::	China	1,418	435
Belize	1,956	173	::	Colombia	13,138	4,460
Bermuda	11,242	2,195	::	Costa Rica	79	546
Bolivia	10	--	::	Cuba	10	--
Brazil	482	--	::	Czechoslovakia	485	--
Br. Vir. Isl.	3,921	27,720	::	Denmark	6,862	4,725

See footnotes at end of table

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Table 2--U.S. agricultural landholdings and acquisitions by country  
of foreign owner--Continued

Country	Holdings <sup>1</sup>	Acqui- sitions <sup>2</sup>	::	Country	Holdings <sup>1</sup>	Acqui- sitions <sup>2</sup>
			::			
	<u>Acres<sup>3</sup></u>		::		<u>Acres<sup>3</sup></u>	
Dominican Rep.	1,659	352	::	Netherlands Ant.	373,024	259,924
Ecuador	168	274	::	New Zealand	177	--
Egypt	--	250	::	Nicaragua	1,786	--
El Salvador	215	--	::	Norway	6,126	829
Finland	--	280	::	Oman	262	5
France	12,133	8,119	::	Pakistan	1,984	287
Germany(West)	380,724	192,473	::	Panama	119,666	43,284
Greece	1,385	54,793	::	Peru	127	253
Guatemala	175	179	::	Philippines	1,456	658
Guyana	35	--	::	Poland	147	--
Honduras	797	--	::	Portugal	411	385
Hong Kong	196,694	2,242	::	Saudi Arabia	291	8,711
India	560	447	::	South Africa	209	--
Indonesia	72	--	::	Spain	1,763	739
Iran	2,022	1,505	::	Sweden	1,630	581
Ireland	14,090	3,920	::	Switzerland	118,746	60,964
Israel	336	--	::	Syria	--	4,658
Italy	7,954	1,656	::	Taiwan	864	1,585
Ivory Coast	119	--	::	Thailand	--	4
Jamaica	311	2	::	Trinidad & Tobago	--	649
Japan	3,739	571	::	Turkey	558	--
Jordan	229	69	::	Turks Islands	750	757
Korea(South)	26	15	::	United Kingdom	247,011	57,579
Kuwait	1,941	721	::	Uruguay	4,119	5,254
Lebanon	4,019	9,398	::	U.S.S.R.	80	--
Liberia	28,795	1,063	::	Venezuela	6,475	3,365
Libyan Arab Rep.	287	661	::	Vietnam	6,475	3,365
Liechtenstein	67,398	48,414	::	Yugoslavia	1	--
Luxembourg	1,550	3,393	::	Multiple	16,933	1,429
Mexico	145,789	15,016	::	Multiple < 5%	--	510
Morocco	--	160	::	Third Tier	1,427	8,341
Namibia	146	--	::	Total Non-U.S. Interest	3,174,465	1,061,775
Netherlands	68,724	36,820	::			

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Table 2--U.S. agricultural landholdings and acquisitions by country  
of foreign owner--Continued

Country	Holdings <sup>1</sup>	Acqui- sitions <sup>2</sup>	Country	Holdings <sup>1</sup>	Acqui- sitions <sup>2</sup>
	<u>Acres<sup>3</sup></u>			<u>Acres<sup>3</sup></u>	
US/Argentina	3,560	--	US/Liechtenstein	31,549	37,023
US/Australia	353	414	US/Luxembourg	443,473	15,821
US/Austria	1,257	235	US/Mexico	24,461	--
US/Bahamas	41,103	2,302	US/Netherlands	300,742	49,679
US/Belgium	48,733	14,866	US/Neth. Antilles	168,619	65,955
US/Bermuda	28,757	8,166	US/Nicaragua	--	240
US/Brazil	858	2,139	US/Panama	49,508	3,825
US/Br. Vir. Isl.	11,501	467	US/Philippines	1,066	158
US/Canada	444,728	59,308	US/South Africa	1,478	--
US/Cayman Islands	16,317	3,992	US/Spain	393	1,854
US/China	388	--	US/Sweden	187	107
US/Colombia	2,284	--	US/Switzerland	90,637	70,014
US/Denmark	185	633	US/Taiwan	799	3,038
US/Ecuador	1,136	--	US/Thailand	--	193
US/Egypt	165	--	US/Trinidad & Tobago	--	20
US/Finland	--	457	US/Turkey	--	443
US/France	64,376	9,217	US/United Kingdom	1,259,868	148,299
US/Germany (West)	293,999	158,489	US/Uruguay	--	581
US/Greece	6,746	--	US/Venezuela	3,218	613
US/Guatemala	1,360	792	US/Multiple	6,190	239
US/Guyana	334	--	US/Multiple <5%	526	649
US/Hong Kong	4,378	2,081	US/Third Tier	6,451	4,146
US/Iran	1,941	1,153			
US/Iraq	800	160	Total U.S.		
US/Italy	74,217	1,981	interest	3,483,164	678,769
US/Japan	20,414	3,883			
US/Korea (South)	--	75	Total	6,657,629	1,740,544
US/Kuwait	588	766			
US/Lebanon	134	--			
US/Liberia	23,387	4,296			

-- = No report

<sup>1</sup> On February 1, 1979. <sup>2</sup> February 2, 1979 through December 31, 1980

<sup>3</sup> 1 hectare = 2.47 acres

For further information contact Peter DeBraal, (202) 447-9179. The complete version of FOREIGN OWNERSHIP OF U.S. AGRICULTURAL LAND should be available by early summer. It will contain a more detailed narrative and a full set of foreign ownership tables.

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